

A Baha'i Faith Journey
Remarks by Paula Myers
HARC Meeting May 10, 2022

My Bahai brothers and sisters in Iran cannot speak out about our blessed Faith. With your approval, I'd like to dedicate my talk to them. And also for Ukraine

Please help me center ourselves, as I say a prayer for protection.

"Lauded be Thy name, O Lord my God!

I entreat Thee by Thy name through which the Hour hath struck,
and the Resurrection came to pass, and fear and trembling seized all
that are in the heaven, of Thy mercy and the clouds of Thy tender compassion,
what will gladden the hearts of Thy servants, who have turned towards Thee
and helped Thy Cause.

Keep safe Thy servants and Thy handmaidens, O my Lord,
from the darts of idle fancy and vain imaginings,
and give them from the hands of Thy grace
a draught of the soft-flowing waters of Thy knowledge.

Thou, truly, art the Almighty,
the Most Exalted, the Ever-Forgiving,
the Most Generous."

Baha'u'llah---

The Bab, The Gate, was born Siyyid Ali Muhammad, in Shiraz, Then Persia, now Iran, Oct 20, 1819, The Bab's era began 1844. Much like John the Baptist, He announced One Greater than He would come to unite the world. He was the forerunner to Baha'u'llah, Baha'u'llah translated as The Glory of God and The Glory of the Lord. He was born November 12, 1817, in Teran, His era began in 1863.

When God sent His Messengers to unite the world every cell in the entire world is infused with enlightenment, thus growth in souls, intelligence, life and knowledge.

Think about the years in, around and between 1844-1863...

1800's- 1860 - Immigrants came to America; Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists,
1840-1920 Was the great awakening

November 12, 1833 Falling stars. The night the stars fell...almost became a religious event....
hours before dawn, which no one predicted. Thousands, 50,000-150,000 stars fell each hour.

May 4, 1844 Metal hit metal - The 1st electrical telegraph, "What hath God Wrought?"

Oct 22, 1844 The Great disappointment. Preacher William Miller of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, was waiting for the second coming and he thought it did not occur. But in actuality, it happened.

1844-- The Great Flood Missouri and Mississippi Rivers

3-12-1844- 1st railroad in Ohio is chartered.

Sept. 17, 1862 Battle of Antietam...freedom of slavery

1865, end of the Civil War

The Baha'i Faith came to me while reading *The Thief in the Night* by WM SEARS. It explains the connection of The Bible's scriptures and the BF writings as God sends another messenger. In the middle of reading that book, I knew I was a Baha'i. Years later, I had the privilege of meeting Wm Sears.

I felt the unity of all, was in my heart. Prejudice was not in my vocabulary. I understood how important it was. A few years later a Bahai friend lent me 2 books. I read those books over and over.

When I asked her where to sign the card, she needed to find out. how I was to declare. This was 1976... I was one of the first few Baha'is in Westminster MD.

The fact that we have no clergy and that women and men are equal, and women are very important, that struck a chord. We are to live the life, and teach the faith in our actions. When it comes up, we tell our friends and acquaintances about the Faith.

The main tenants are

One God, unity of religions
Oneness of humankind
independent investigation of truth
The essential harmony of science and religion.
Elimination of prejudice of all kinds
Universal compulsory education,
Spiritual solutions to economic problems
A universal language
Universal peace upheld by a world federation

After moving to Washington County in 1989, where my husband lived, I realized there were no Bahai's here. I found a deep purpose to be a part of this county's community. The closest Baha'is were in West VA, We attended holy days, and feasts and felt real camaraderie.

My boss at the time, said I'd like this Interfaith group he'd read about in the paper, and I should attend the panel discussion at the Kepler theatre I felt right at home with the Interfaith Coalition of Washington County,

The 20-year journey with the interfaith coalition was better than a religious college education. I valued my Bahai beliefs and experienced what the Bahai teachings were all about and put them into practice. It expanded my understanding of uniting one heart at a time. As I helped at events I saw how people of different religions and no religious beliefs joined together in conversations and created the garden of many colors God wants for us in the world.

We held a celebration of the birth of Baha U llah at the Brethren Church downtown Hagerstown. Friends still talk about the delicious different nationalities of foods, and the wonderful DC Baha'i Choral who performed. Since we had no building, we were very grateful for the connection of Ed Poling and the Interfaith Coalition.

Before an event at the library, a dear friend and member of the Interfaith, Julie Ferron, invited a friend. Julie told her she'd be welcome and that there were many different faiths. This friend mentioned that she was a Bahai. At the meeting Julie sent her straight to me.... Katie and I were very excited!! Especially because she'd been in Hagerstown for quite some time, and did know a fellow Bahai was in the area.

Without the Interfaith, heaven knows how much longer it would have taken for us to finally meet.

I got to know the Secular Humanist folks who attended some of our meetings. They were interested in the Baha'i faith and asked if I'd come to Frederick and talk for their Sunday meeting at the library. Well, sure, I'd be happy to... so I'm explaining away and a little nervous but a lady in the audience was nodding and smiling and so pleased, I thought she either likes what I'm saying or is just really happy.

After the talk, she came up to me and introduced herself as a member of the Baha'i faith and lived in Frederick!! We were amazed and became fast friends. Again, I may not have gotten to know her that quickly without my path in the Interfaith!!

Julie also suggested for another serious commemoration that the Interfaith should help us, The Centennial for the Birth of the Bab. 2019. Sandy Boyer helped to book the community room at St Mark's where Unity holds their worship service, We had a beautiful event there.

Many folks learned about the Baha'i Faith through the events and public meetings.

All of us have a path. It was fortunate that I found The Interfaith Coalition!! What a fulfilling 20 years! And I put my love for The Faith to use.

Not saying all is rosy, but we will BE tested!! We will always grow. As God has no ending our souls have no ending.

The BF has thousands of spiritual writings, by The Bab, Baha u llah, and Abdul' baha, the Servant of the Glory, He is the son of Baha u llah, who we look to as the perfect man. These messengers of God were persecuted and their families stayed with them in prison or in the prison cities where they were held.

I did not have the internet as we do today. I ask you to look it up, do a little research:

<https://www.bahai.org/>

Check it out for yourselves. Remember, I had 2 books and The Thief in the Night.

I have a Catholic background, but I knew there was more, so I searched and prayed for guidance.

We have Ruhi classes and books to help us grow and learn. We have guidance to help our communities advance to become spiritual. There's a quest and activities to help our communities and especially the youth.

This weekend Frederick Baha'is are holding a convention- Building Vibrant Communities Montgomery Co South is hosting a virtual Divine Springtime Devotional--Spiritual Unity Feast. If you'd like to know more attend, write your email and I'll send those links.